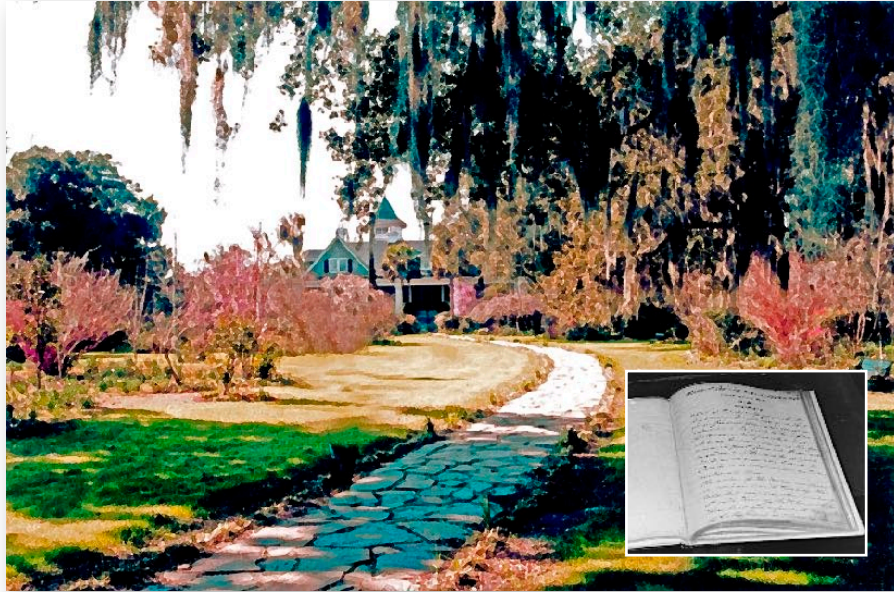


# Daily View

*“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13*

April 14, 2020



Photograph of the backyard of Magnolia Plantation, Charleston, SC. A preacher took ownership of the place after his brother died and, though against the law, secretly taught the slaves there how to read. There was a little spot back here (not shown) where he would sit and meditate on what he planned to preach about on Sunday. The inset shows his sermon notes from a sermon entitled, “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8).

## “When Dost Thee Think?”

The Quakers had many fine ideas about life, and there is a story from them that illustrates the point I am trying to make. It concerns a conversation between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and a Quaker woman he had met. Maybe Coleridge was boasting a bit, but he told the woman how he had arranged the use of time so he would have no wasted hours. He said he memorized Greek while dressing and during breakfast. He went on with his list of other mental activities—making notes, reading, writing, formulating thoughts and ideas—until bedtime. The Quaker lady listened unimpressed. When Coleridge was finished with his explanation, she asked him a simple, searching question: “My friend, **when dost thee think?**” — A.W. Tozer

Jesus often said words to the effect of “what do you think?” Jesus wanted people to **think**. Paul did, too. After his famous statement about *pressing on* in Philippians 3:12-14 he says, “Let those of us who are mature **think** this way...” Then there’s Philippians 4:8, “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, **think** about these things.*”

Thinking — that is, meditating, reflecting, contemplating what you have learned — has taken a back seat to just about everything else. We surround ourselves with noise. Any silence seems like “radio silence.” Remember that? You’re listening to a radio station and all of a sudden — **a deafening silence**. Seconds seem like minutes and you frantically start changing the channel to make sure it’s not the end of the world.

That’s probably not a thing anymore. Cell phones, TV, Spotify, AirPods, headphones, SiriusXL, CarPlay, video games, podcasts, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tik Tok and so much more... **“when dost thee think?”**

I must confess. I used to go the doctor’s office and just sit there and think about stuff until I was called in. These days, since I have access to the whole wide world in my pocket (called an iPhone), I immediately grab it and start searching for something to read or watch — there are plenty of places I can go in my little pocket world. I doubt that’s what Dr. Seuss had in mind when he wrote “*Oh, the Places You’ll Go!*” since he was appealing to that elusive thing called “imagination.”

An older preacher friend of mine used to say “it’s not *what* people think, it’s *whether* they do.” The question implied by that statement looms much larger today than when I heard him say it 30 years ago. When we forget how to think, we are easily led, allowing others to do our thinking for us. We dwell in an echo chamber, subscribe to group think and are prone to confirmation bias. If we all let everyone else do our thinking for us, we all are likely to become Dumb and Dumber.

At the Folsom church, we’re surrounded by thinkers. Our Bible classes are spectacular. I can use that superlative because the more I’m forced to be away from those Bible studies, the more I appreciate how rich they are. It’s hard to duplicate those classes on Zoom (though it’s better than no classes at all). Let’s encourage each other to turn off Sirius or Spotify for a period of time each day; don’t read anything, watch anything. Just sit and think. Encourage your kids to do it. “*Oh, the Places (They’ll) Go!*”

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